



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

1230 YORK AVENUE · NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10021

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November 30, 1978

James Murray Luck Selection Committee

Dr. Philip W. Anderson
Dr. Eugene Garfield
Dr. Bentley Glass
Dr. Joshua Lederberg

Gentlemen:

I have had very useful replies from some of you to my earlier letter. On the other hand, since not all have responded in something over a month, it is clear that we cannot accomplish our job by a series of actions that entails many rounds of correspondence. In the hope of getting our project moving, I will at this point set down a few specific suggestions for actions in the hope that we can get enough done during the coming month so that with a single meeting in January we can arrive at a nomination for the first prize and a set of procedures to be recommended for subsequent years. There seems quite a little to be said for rotating the award through different fields in successive years. On the other hand arriving at a plan of rotation probably needs a meeting, and it seems likely that a fairly limited polling of appropriate sources will yield us a few obvious candidates of high priority and with these in hand we might be able to arrive at a nomination for the first award.

The steps I suggest are the following. First, Drs. Anderson, Glass, Lederberg, and myself would take primary responsibility for obtaining some nominees from areas corresponding to Academy classes 1, 2, 4, and 5, respectively. This might be accomplished by sending inquiries to a few appropriate editors and, perhaps most importantly, to a number of individuals in the given fields who seem likely on the basis of your own knowledge or of discussions with colleagues to be especially well qualified to make appropriate suggestions. Since one of the main ideas involved in this award seems to be that of giving recognition to review activity that plays an important part in leading to scientific contributions, probably some of the best suggestions would come from scientists who have made distinguished contributions and might have been so influenced by reviews.

I will enclose a copy of a suggested form letter that could be used for these inquiries. Please feel free to use it or modify it in any way you wish or to use your own. It would facilitate getting our job done most if you gentlemen were to send out these inquiries yourself, collect the replies, and give me the list of suggested nominees obtained, if possible by January 1. If any of you find it inconvenient or impractical to carry out this procedure yourself, a substitute would be to send me a list of individuals to whom our inquiries might be addressed. If you do this, however, please send names together with titles and full mailing addresses.

Once we have a collection of candidates, I would plan then to ask Dr. Garfield to give us citation data, which would clearly be valuable in narrowing down the list. It seems best to me to use the citation data at this stage rather than initially since reviews that might clearly merit this type of award need not have appeared in any of the publications devoted wholly to reviewing, as for example the Annual Review series.

The third step would be a half-day meeting in January at which we might be able to agree on a clearly suitable nomination for the first award and also to work out a set of recommendations for a more systematic set of procedures that could be used in subsequent years to ensure appropriate distribution of the awards over different fields and adequate opportunity for all relevant types of reviewing to enter the "competition."

Since the reliability of the mails in the New York area is below reasonable standards, would you return the enclosed postcard to indicate that you have received this letter. Also if you would like to make any change in your proposed contribution to Step 1, you might indicate it on the postcard or give me a call at 212-360-1740.

Sincerely,

Bill

William K. Estes, Chairman
James Murray Luck Selection Committee

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